



**MT. HOOD AND COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE RECREATION ENHANCEMENT AND
CONSERVATION ACT**

**“WHAT THEY’RE SAYING”
MAY 2022**

"The people of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs have lived since time immemorial within and around what is today the Mount Hood National Forest. Our 1855 treaty reserves our rights to fish, hunt, and gather our cultural foods. We exercise these rights on the Mt Hood National Forest. As the largest neighbor to the National Forest, our reservation is impacted by wildfire threats to our own forest and communities. Rep. Blumenauer’s legislation respects our history and ongoing relationship with the Mt. Hood National Forest. More importantly, the legislation ensures that tribal interests and traditional ecological knowledge are integrated into forest management for the benefit of all Oregonians."

- Jonathan Smith, Chairman of the Tribal Council for the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs

"Representative Blumenauer’s bill is the most meaningful acknowledgement in recent years of the impact public lands visitation and recreation has on local communities and our vital public safety services. With expanded recreational access and opportunities comes more demand for public safety services. As this bill moves forward, we urge the sub-committee to ensure critical funding for local law enforcement remains intact."

- Matt English, Sheriff, Hood River County

"Sustainable Northwest commends Representative Blumenauer for introduction of the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act, and its emphatic recognition of tribal sovereignty and treaty rights. Far too often, legislation designed to protect and enhance federal natural resource values fails to respect, uphold, and implement the legally binding obligations the federal government has to Tribal nations in these landscapes. This legislation paves the way for a new and equitable approach to achieve protection and enhancement of treasured places, while explicitly upholding and supporting Tribal treaty rights and sovereignty in land management planning and decision-making."

- Greg Block, President, Sustainable Northwest

"Mt. Hood provides an abundance of natural and sacred values worth protecting — clean drinking water, salmon habitat and culturally important foods. We support Representative Blumenauer’s bold effort to establish durable protections and forward-thinking management strategies that honor the rights of Tribal Nations and create more equitable access to our public lands."

- David Moryc, Senior Director, Wild and Scenic Rivers and Public Lands Policy, American Rivers

"Unrivaled scenic beauty and outdoor recreation are primary motivators for people traveling to and around Oregon. Therefore, it is particularly important that we prioritize establishing the Mt.



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Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act that will create an optimized approach to enhancing sustainable outdoor recreation, protecting our special places, proactively preparing for wildfire risk mitigation, and modernizing transportation access – all done while prioritizing the inclusion of local tribes and honoring treaty rights.”

- Todd Davidson, CEO, Travel Oregon

“Thank you for working with the Hood River County Commission and our other stakeholders the past few months to mitigate our concerns with the REC Act of 2022. After reading the draft this last week, there are still some concerns with wilderness designations, but it is obvious that significant strides have been made to make this a positive and workable bill for our County. You and your staff have been a pleasure to work with and we look forward to working with you through the process to final adoption.”

- Michael J. Oates, Chair, Hood River County Board of Commissioners

"On behalf of the whitewater paddling community we wish to express our appreciation to Congressman Blumenauer and Senator Wyden for the opportunities to provide input on legislation that will advance conservation and enhance sustainable and equitable outdoor recreation for Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge. We are pleased to see the input we provided on the need for expanded protections for the Sandy River, Hood River, and White River included in this legislation. As a party to the settlement to remove Marmot Dam 15 years ago, we are thrilled that this segment of the Sandy River will be permanently protected and remain free flowing."

- Thomas O'Keefe, Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director, American Whitewater

“Multnomah County is very supportive of the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation (REC) Act, which champions recreation enhancement and conservation in the Mt. Hood National Forest and Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Our County is an active participant in multiple collaborative planning efforts to increase safety and equitable access to the unique and outstanding recreational opportunities in our East County communities. We also have been working with these communities on wildfire recovery and mitigation efforts and we are happy to see that The REC Act provides us with an opportunity to take the necessary next steps to continue this work. We believe this piece of legislation, if passed, would greatly support our efforts, improve the quality of life for all who live, work and play in this part of our state, and enable us to assist in implementing a coordinated strategy for the Columbia River Gorge and Mt. Hood region.”

- Deborah Kafoury, Multnomah County Chair, and Lori Stegmann, District 4 Commissioner

"We support the draft legislation to provide conservation and recreation enhancement for Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. In particular, we value the provisions calling for stakeholder involvement in creating recreation management plans, convening Centers for Excellence, and establishing access committees for these public lands. In addition, we value the protections the bill offers for the Pacific Crest Trail. We are delighted to see that funding appropriations for these critical initiatives have been included in the draft bill. It will be impossible to accomplish the legislation's objectives without funding. We also appreciate the efforts you have made to gather and consider the views of all stakeholders in drafting this

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legislation. Back Country Horsemen of Oregon and Oregon Equestrian Trails wish to express our thanks for your leadership in developing this important bill."

- Kim McCarrel, Back Country Horsemen of Oregon, Oregon Equestrian Trails

"This legislation comes after decades of community discussions, planning efforts and heartfelt conversation about the many needs of popular and under-resourced recreation lands in the Mt. Hood National Forest and the Columbia River Gorge National Recreation Area. A comprehensive bill that addresses and provides new authority and resources for Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge is overdue. This legislation is a good start at addressing the many problems of Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge, and in our view, it deserves favorable consideration by the House Natural Resources Committee."

- Matthew Drake, CEO, Mt. Hood Meadows

"As chair of Government Camp CPO, I support Congressman Blumenauer's draft legislation regarding Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge."

- Nick Rinard, President, Government Camp Community Planning Organization

"Bark has been closely following the development of the Legislation being introduced by Blumenauer's office which would massively expand National Recreation Areas on Mt. Hood, improve co-stewardship with the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, improve recreation access and infrastructure on Mt. Hood and much more. This legislation provides a crucial opportunity to explore how new National Recreation Areas are managed and whether these areas will be used to prioritize natural ecological processes, carbon sequestration, and indigenous sovereignty. We look forward to staying engaged in this process to ensure this legislation upholds these values."

- Cara Christofferson, Forest Policy Advocacy Coordinator, Bark

"The Gorge is loved and in some places, over loved. This legislation takes a critical step in bringing sustainable recreation and better transportation options to the Gorge. We look forward to working with Congressman Blumenauer to continue to improve his bill for both the Gorge and Mt. Hood."

- Kevin Gorman, Executive Director, Friends of the Columbia Gorge

"Congressman Blumenauer's work in planning for the future in our rapidly growing state is essential. We want to find an effective strategy for both enjoying and preserving the natural beauty of Oregon."

- Jason Taylor, President, Lost Lake Resort, Inc.

"I deeply appreciate you prioritizing the involvement of stakeholders in this latest effort to provide for conservation, respect for Tribal treaty rights, and recreation enhancement around Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. This undertaking further reinforces your longstanding commitment to protecting the Mt. Hood National Forest and the Bull Run Watershed that serves as the highest quality source of drinking water for Portland residents."

- Mingus Mapps, Commissioner, City of Portland

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"The work Congressman Blumenauer and staff are doing to protect and preserve the treasure that is Mt. Hood, while enhancing the recreational experience, is vital and appreciated. Growing population means more people visit Mt. Hood, threatening to overwhelm sensitive areas. More people means more traffic, more traffic hazards, more environmental impacts and more pressure on already understaffed law enforcement resources. A new plan is needed to more effectively deal with the growing complexity that goes along with population growth. Our hope is that the legislation's aspirations are matched with appropriate funding so Mt. Hood can be protected while recreation is safely enhanced."

- Dave McDonald, Executive Director, Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp

"Congressman Blumenauer's proposed legislation advances the recognition of tribal sovereignty and treaty rights on federal lands in three important ways. First, it expands the definition of best available science to include indigenous knowledge, overcoming a serious deficiency in the Northwest Forest Plan and related forest and project plans. Second, it sets up a co-management structure for Treaty Resources Emphasis Zones that should advance the inclusion of Tribal goals and knowledge in planning and management. Third, it highlights the existing commitment (from previous legislation) to the Cultural Foods Obligation; rapid implementation of that commitment could serve as a testing ground for broader co-management."

- K. Norman Johnson, Emeritus Professor in the College of Forestry, Oregon State University

"The Mt. Hood REC Act of 2022 is a transformational model for public land conservation—centering the importance of sustainable recreation experiences and wildfire resilience—across the treasured landscapes of Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge. The Oregon Mountain Biking Coalition applauds Congressman Blumenauer for introducing this legislation and is proud to partner with other supporters of recreation in championing this new vision for expanding equitable access to the outdoors for all Oregonians."

- Nathan Kuder, Board President, Oregon Mountain Biking Coalition

"Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge offer unparalleled recreation opportunities for Oregonians, Washingtonians, and visitors. We are thrilled with Congressman Blumenauer's Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act and grateful for his leadership to protect the region. The bill enhances conservation and recreation and honors Tribal treaty rights. We are particularly pleased with the provisions to create more sustainable trails and recreation opportunities, support Tribal co-management, improve equitable access to Mt. Hood and its trails systems, protect the Pacific Crest Trail, designate Wild & Scenic Rivers, improve transportation, and expand Wilderness around Mt. Hood. Outdoor Alliance is grateful to Congressman Blumenauer for being a true champion of conservation and for his work to protect and improve outdoor recreation opportunities."

- Louis Geltman, Policy Director, Outdoor Alliance

"The Port of Cascade Locks wants to extend its appreciation to you for the time and effort that you and your staff have invested in drafting legislation that attempts to address many long-standing concerns within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. This is the first time since the Scenic Act became law in 1986, that the Federal Government has considered legislation that is specifically intended to enhance the quality of life within the Scenic Area for local

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residents and the visitors that come to the Gorge to experience its world-class natural attractions. We applaud the effort and believe that the draft is a good start towards accomplishing something meaningful for the region."

- Jess Groves, President, Port of Cascade Locks

"The Mt. Hood/Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation (REC) Act is important legislation that aligns with REI's commitment to building a more just, equitable, and inclusive outdoor culture. We have long-supported shared stewardship partnerships on Mount Hood and in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and this legislation can be a solution that helps to combat the climate crisis through investments in natural climate infrastructure, ecological resiliency, active transportation systems that enable car-free commuting, and essential improvements to trails. We appreciate the leadership of Representative Blumenauer to develop this legislation in partnership with local stakeholders, and we look forward to working with him to ensure it is passed and signed into law."

- Taldi Harrison, Head of Government Affairs, REI Co-op

"The Rhododendron Water Association and the entire Rhododendron community are pleased to be working closely with Congressman Blumenauer toward improving the livability, safety and environment within the Mt. Hood National Forest and surrounding communities."

- Steven Graeper, President, Rhododendron Water Association

"On behalf of our local nonprofit, Teacup Nordic, I write to express appreciation and support for congressional actions aimed to better serve the public's increasing desire to enjoy the splendor of Mt. Hood and the Columbia Gorge. From November into May, our mostly all-volunteer nonprofit gets our community outside, enjoying Oregon's natural beauty, and engaging in healthy sport. Our 43 years of service to tens of thousands of skiers each year lets us see how our Mt. Hood National Forest is being "loved to death." Your legislation helpfully proposes ways for the federal government to step up and find the pragmatic progress needed."

- Noel Johnson, President, Teacup Nordic

"The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act is critical to future recreation, travel, and enjoyment on Mt. Hood and in the Columbia River Gorge. I believe this bill can deliver smart, sustainable planning, and would bring the support and direction needed to preserve our heavily used and beloved outdoor recreation areas."

- Jeff Kohnstamm, President/Area Operator, Timberline Lodge

"The Western Environmental Law Center congratulates Congressman Blumenauer and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs on the introduction of the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act. It is past time for the federal government to reaffirm and fulfill its obligations to protect and steward Treaty resources, and the legislation is a first step towards authentic co-management of those Treaty resources, including cultural foods, on the Mount Hood National Forest. WELC also applauds the use of traditional ecological science and knowledge to develop and implement a restoration strategy to conserve Treaty resources at risk from wildfires and other stressors driven by a warming climate. The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act is a bold

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blueprint for federal land management agencies to deliver on the federal trust responsibility owed to Indigenous peoples across this country.”

- Susan Jane Brown, Wildlands Program Director & Staff Attorney, Western Environmental Law Center

“We are grateful to Congressman Blumenauer and his staff for their leadership in introducing this crucial and timely legislation to support climate change resiliency and meet the needs of a diverse and growing population.”

- Dave and Caroline Lipps, owners of Thunder Island Brewing, Cascade Locks, Oregon

“We want to share our support for the draft legislation to provide for conservation and recreation enhancement for Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. We are so pleased to see how Congressmen Blumenauer’s office has integrated the input of community stakeholders into this draft legislation being introduced to support Honoring Tribal Treaty Rights, Enhancing Sustainable Outdoor Recreation, Wildfire Planning, Mitigation, and Rehabilitation, Protection of Special Places, and Modernizing Transit and Transportation. We especially want to underscore the importance of the funding allocations in this draft legislation to bolster stewardship partnerships, trail development, and transportation options to support safe, equitable, and sustainable access to this treasured landscape for all. We are grateful to Congressman Blumenauer and his staff for their leadership in forwarding this legislation that is crucial and timely to restore treaty rights, support resilience in a changing climate, and meet the needs of a diverse and growing population.”

- Stephanie Noll, Coalition Director, Oregon Trails Coalition

“The Pacific Crest Trail Association supports the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act of 2022. We appreciate Congressman Blumenauer’s efforts to highlight and improve management of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.”

- Justin Kooyman, Associate Director of Trail Operations, Pacific Crest Trail Association

“This bill seeks solutions to long standing recreational challenges and addresses habitat needs by protecting cold water fisheries and big game migration corridors. We appreciate Congressman Blumenauer’s work to ensure this landscape receives the funding and attention it needs to remain a place we can enjoy for years to come.”

- Michael O’Casey, Pacific Northwest Field Manager, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

“As one of the only regional transit agencies in the Gorge, Hood River County Transportation District (dba Columbia Area Transit – CAT) sees the transportation elements of the Mt Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation (REC) Act as a way to jump start a new vision and plan for transportation access and livability in the Gorge region. A vision that can allow this region to continue to prosper and grow in a way that sustains both the beauty of the Gorge while ensuring the economic stability of the communities and residents who live here. CAT looks forward to working on a multi-state, multi-jurisdictional Gorge transportation plan. A plan that not only seeks to integrate and consolidate roadway, transit, bike, pedestrian and congestion management strategies into one cohesive and thoughtful network but also helps

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establish funding priorities and individual agency action plans for implementation. We believe this coordinated approach to transportation in the Gorge will not only support both urban and rural residents as they access key activity centers in this bi-state region, but also offer new funding opportunities that build and enhance funding equity between the urban area and rural parts of the Gorge. In short, we see the REC Act as critical to our transit agency as we work to support and sustain a livable Gorge for generations to come.”

- Patty Fink, Executive Director, Hood River County Transportation District (dba Columbia Area Transit)

“Vive NW supports the Bill Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act of 2022 as this area provides an infinity of opportunities for the communities we serve to recreate, support local businesses and engage with stewardship activities such as tree plantings that support the restoration of critical salmon habitat on the Zigzag River. Winter activities have also become some of the most popular activities Vive NW coordinates within the Latinx and BIPOC communities. Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge are very important areas for all communities for recreation purposes and to support stewardship efforts and contribute to the local economy therefore we support this Bill.”

- Jorge Guzman, Executive Director, ViveNW

“TKO strongly supports the bold vision and leadership of the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act of 2022 as a crucial management shift toward sustainable recreation, forest restoration and leveraging the power of volunteer stewardship for Mount Hood and the Columbia Gorge. We look forward to helping shape this forward-thinking new vision for our public lands that will help ensure that future generations inherit a Gorge and Mount Hood that remain the world-class destinations we are so fortunate to enjoy today.”

- Steve Kruger, Executive Director, Trailkeepers of Oregon

“Thank you for your efforts to introduce legislation to improve protection of the outstanding resources of the Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood National Forest.”

- Kris Fade, Owner of Analemma Winery, Mosier, Oregon

“We strongly support the provisions in Section 201 calling for safe, effective recreation use and equitable access; and in Section 502 that call for a strategy related to coordinated transit and improved recreational and public safety access in the Mt. Hood region. We look forward to following the legislative process and hopefully participating in implementation of the REC Act. Thank you for your leadership of this important legislation.”

- Oregon State Representative Anna Williams and Tom Imeson, Co-Conveners, Oregon Solutions, Mt. Hood Rest Area Relocation Project

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